



1st Force Service Support Group

Key Volunteer Newsletter

24 January 2003

KVN Family Readiness Guidance

Last week, 1st Force Service Support Group received orders to deploy to Southwest Asia. The deployment order included every major unit in the 1st FSSG. As a result, Marines and Sailors from the 1st FSSG will be steadily deploying overseas over the next several weeks. Some of the specific dates for unit departures haven't been determined yet, but those dates will become clearer in upcoming days. When your spouse is able to tell you when they are going to leave, we ask that you protect that information from people who do not need to know, in order to safeguard the departure of those units.

The Group is deploying forces to carry out its mission of supporting the I Marine Expeditionary Force with the logistical services and materiel it needs to win our nation's battles. In general, most 1st FSSG units will be deploying to Kuwait. 1st FSSG has already sent personnel over the last several months to an expeditionary camp called Commando Camp (in Kuwait), and some 1st FSSG personnel will continue to be located there. 1st FSSG units will also be located at other camp installations around Kuwait and the Persian Gulf area. Of course, if the President makes a decision to begin operations in Iraq, our location will change as the situation progresses.

The conditions have continued to improve over time at Commando Camp, to include hot meals, enough water for periodic showers, and a post office. Camps where our Marines and Sailors will be living will also have most of these comforts, including access to a field exchange for the purchase of routine comfort and health items. Certain units within the 1st FSSG will have missions that take them further away from these established camps, so they may have less access to these amenities.

We know many spouses are concerned about how they will stay in touch with their loved ones. Marines and Sailors currently have some access to e-mail and are

encouraged to use it to communicate with their families, but realize that as soon as operations begin there will be delays and outages of e-mail service. Addresses for sending letters and packages will be distributed to you spouses. Our postal folks tell us that letters should get to Kuwait within about 10 days, but packages will take longer. The reason is that letters are sorted by machine and given priority over packages. Packages are manually sorted and screened before being shipped overseas. Packages over 48" long and greater than 16" in circumference will be returned. We anticipate a travel time in excess of 20 days for packages.

Many family members have asked for more insight into how long this deployment will last. The answer is that we really don't know. The whole reason we are going is to position a significant military presence in the region and be ready to conduct operations if we are ordered to do so.

If we are called upon to fight, 1st FSSG Marines and Sailors will generally be located behind the ground combat units operating on the front lines. In some cases, certain units are tasked with directly supporting the 1st Marine Division, but generally, our personnel are in the rear area pushing combat supplies and services forward. This does not mean that those in the rear area are completely out of reach of harm's way, but all 1st FSSG units have security plans and have trained personnel to provide security for their unit. Your Marines and Sailors have the training and the gear they need to protect themselves against any expected threat, and we're continually training to ensure everyone is comfortable using their equipment.

I hope this information is helpful to you and your loved ones. We'll continue to give updates as the situation continues to develop. I promise you every effort is being made to deploy, accomplish the mission, and bring the Marines and Sailors of 1st FSSG back home as quickly and safely as possible.

Semper Fi!

E. G. USHER III